(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that our education system and prevailing defects in evaluation system are primarily behind this tendency; and

(d) if so, the measures being taken by Government to check this tendency?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) to (d) The problem of increasing stress among students during examinations and instances of some students committing suicides due to failure in examination and stress have been engaging the attention of the Government. However, there are various contributory factors such as competition, peer and parental pressure, fast changing socio and economic conditions, lack of employment opportunities and fear of failure in examinations which become the cause of tragedies like suicides among students.

The Ministry is deeply concerned with the issue of high stress level among students caused by the public examinations at the end of class X and XII conducted by various boards, Joint Entrance Examinations for IITs and other entrance examinations. To address the question of promoting equality in access to education as also allow the students to have a stress free environment of joyful learning, the Ministry had convened a meeting recently with Eminent Educationists, Principals, representatives from premier institutions such as the Indian Institutes of Technology and Indian Institutes of Management, Heads of the Boards of Examination and others. It was unanimously agreed that there must be systemic reforms to eliminate exam-related stress. It was also felt that a national consensus on the issue should be reached through wider discussion.

Measures for schools hit by Tsunami disaster

4050. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has set up a group of experts to assess the damage and suggest measures for the schools hit by the Tsunami disaster; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) and (b) NCERT has informed that it has organized a series of meetings of various senior officials to discuss the requirements of the Tsunami affected areas. Three teams have visited different Tsunami hit areas *viz.* Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Pondicherry and Tamil Nadu between February 8—16, 2005 to assess the educational requirements of these areas which could be addressed by NCERT without duplicating efforts already put in by State Governments, Union Territories, International Agencies and NGOs. As a follow up NCERT has provided NCERT textbooks to children from A&N Islands free of cost. As on date, 61,152 copies of 120 titles for different classes estimated at Rs. 18,35,478/- have been provided. In addition, examination related inputs for children appearing for Board Examination have been taken up. NCERT has also initiated consultations with various State level organizations and NGOs.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Mid-Day Meal Scheme

†4051. PROF. R.B.S. VERMA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are considering to implement 'Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan' and 'Mid-Day Meal Scheme' jointly;

(b) if so, by when the said scheme is likely to be implemented; and

(c) the details of the amount sanctioned by Government for Mid-Day Meal Scheme during the current year, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) and (b) The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Mid-Day Meal Schemes are being implemented in a convergent manner with a common objective for universalization of elementary education;

(c) Details of amount sanctioned State-wise under the 'Mid-Day Meal Scheme' during the year 2004-05 are enclosed as a Statement.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.